

Bureau of Land Management
Folsom Field Office
Comment Form
Sierra Draft Resource Management Plan

December 2, 2006

Topic/Issue: Support for "Plan B" Draft RMP proposals re OHV and Shooting restrictions to "designated areas" only

Watershed: Yuba/Bear

** THE FOLLOWING WAS RATIFIED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE RED DOG-YOU BET ASSOCIATION AT A GENERAL MEETING HELD DECEMBER 2, 2006:*

We think BLM ought to: As proposed in Plan B (and also in plan D), we fully support the concept of restricting OHV use on BLM properties to designated areas only. It is our understanding that there are no designated OHV riding areas in our neighborhoods (the major streets being: Red Dog, You Bet, Chalk Bluff, Buckeye, and Lowell Hill Roads near Grass Valley, California)

Also as proposed in Plan B, we would like to see shooting restricted to designated areas, only. We do not see any designated areas proposed in our neighborhoods in the draft RMP plan of August, 2006.

Because: **The following applies to the proposal for allowing OHV use only in designated areas**

We are writing to you on behalf of the Red Dog-You Bet Association. Our neighborhood association of homeowners was formed nearly 30 years ago to deal with two problems: the misuse of off-highway vehicles and excessive and dangerous target shooting on our public and private roads and properties. We are a rural community with relatively large parcel sizes, most in the range of 20-40 acres. We are surrounded by 1100 acres of privately held land, "The Diggins", which was formerly the site of hydraulic gold mining. Also by significant pieces of BLM property, most of which are either landlocked by private properties or too steep and brush-covered to be of any recreational use except to occasional hearty hikers. Given the size and intermingling of these properties, our area gives the impression of being an uninhabited wilderness. I assure you it is not. At last estimate, we have 489 residents living in fairly secluded privacy among the trees.

These many years later, after scores of meetings with governmental officials, new strategies, plans, and agreements, we are still faced with the same problems that spawned our Association:

OHVs routinely travel on our County roads, often passing noisily past our driveways and homes. (Driving an OHV on a county road is prohibited by the California vehicle code.)

OHVs routinely ride on our private roads, which must be maintained by the residents who own them. Within the last 2 years, we had an OHV jamboree, staged without the necessary permits, exceeding 1000 people (many of whom trekked up an already muddy private road). Any and all sign of expensive resident-provided gravel surfacing disappeared in the melee, with no recourse.

Signs we post to identify private properties are either ignored or destroyed. Residents pay for the cost of these signs.

Gates barring entrance to private properties are routinely destroyed. We have one location where a substantial gate has never survived longer than a couple of months. In another location, huge boulders planted as a barricade were recently moved aside.

OHV'ers often use private property as a restroom or for parking, with no consideration for the resident who may be standing on his or her deck, 20 feet away.

Historical landmarks are desecrated, one example being the Red Dog Cemetery. The deceased are literally about to fall out of their graves due to the motorcycle cuts in the hillsides. Although a public cemetery, no one would think of burying his or her loved one in this location given the present vandalism.

Noise. In these canyons, the sound of a single OHV travels for 5 miles. When there are a number of OHVs, it can sound like a war zone "over yonder" for the duration of an entire week-end. There is no escaping this noise if one wishes to enjoy quiet time on the deck.

Residents are forced to confront the law-breakers. The Sheriff's Department has, for the last 2 years, received grants to subsidize off-duty deputies to patrol the neighborhood during the summer months. This has provided us blessed relief, but the deputy's shift only runs on the weekends, during the day. Before and after the Sheriff's shifts, and in other seasons, residents must fend for themselves. One neighbor suffers repeated and intentional vandalism to his driveway by a group of rambunctious motorcyclists.

Hiking trails on private property are destroyed. We have one section of trail which, despite signs, barricades, and patrols by the property owner, has been claimed and re-claimed by OHV'ers to be their own.

Animal habitat is threatened. Our neighborhood is populated by numerous bears, foxes, deer, raccoons, coyotes, and mountain lions. We are usually happy to have them as neighbors, and want their habitats to be protected.

Soils are eroded when OHVs leave the roadways.

Law Enforcement is not able to handle the problems caused by irresponsible OHV use. They have suggested we try surveillance cameras, but have little else to offer unless they can catch them in the act.

Trash. It accumulates in the forests and along the roadsides.

Loss of Property Value. We have properties in this neighborhood which are essentially not saleable because of their location within hearing range of OHV riding areas, and being subject to repeated trespass.

The following applies to the proposal for allowing target shooting only in designated areas:

Given the “patchwork” of private and BLM properties in this neighborhood, we have had numerous incidents of target shooting where the bullets cross the boundaries between BLM and private properties, thereby threatening residents on their own property. Some example are:

- . Hikers on private property had to make a multi-mile detour to return home to avoid gunfire.
- . Children riding bikes on their property near Lowell Hill and Red Dog Roads were endangered by gunfire.
- . Bullets entered private property at 20100 Red Dog Rd and endangered the residents
- . A resident, investigating gunfire near his property on Lowell Hill Road, encountered an exceedingly hostile individual. Fortunately, he was able to get a picture of the man’s truck and license number, then forward that to the Nevada County Sheriff’s Office. The Sheriff advised that he stay away from this gunman, as he was known to be someone exceedingly dangerous.

All of the above are intolerable in the name of public safety.

As with the OHVs, the noise of gunfire in this locale reverberates excessively in the canyons and travels for miles. This affects the peace and quiet of the many residents living on the periphery.

Thank-you for considering our requests on these matters.

Sincerely,

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